

CD 2011--65



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

2010-11 SEASON

Sunday, April 10, 2011
7:30 pm. Walter Hall

mostlyminimal@walterhall.calm - Percussion Ensemble

Director: Beverley Johnston

Film coordinators and editors:

Nikos and Andreas Evdemon (...*dust into dust*...)

Beth Kates and Ed Reifel (*Dark River*)

Bruno Degazio and Bev Johnston (...*and bells remembered*...)

PROGRAM

1. *Intro*

Chamade Suite: for Snare Drum Quartet

Igor Lesnik

2 *Chamade*

3 *Retraite*

4 *Diane*

Players: Bruce Chi, Rafael Ponciano, Edna Teguibon, Dorian Cox, Coach: Tim Francom

5. *I RITI: Ritual March - "The Funeral of Achilles"*

Giacinto Scelsi

Players: Jonathan Smith, Rafael Ponciano, Alejandro Cespedes, Dorian Cox, Coach: Mark Duggan

6 *Intro*

7. *What to do till the Power Comes on*

Ann Southam

Players: Bruce Chi, Rafael Ponciano, Edna Teguibon, Coach: Beverley Johnston

8. *...and bells remembered...*

John Luther Adams

Players: Stefan Kitai, Greg Harrison, Edna Teguibon, Alejandro Cespedes, Bruce Chi, Coach: Joel Cormier

INTERMISSION

9, 10

Glass Houses No. 1 and No. 5

Ann Southam (arr. Greg Harrison)

Players: Greg Harrison, Jonathan Smith

11 *Dark River*

John Zorn

Players: Dorian Cox, Stefan Kitai, Coach: Ed Reifel

12 *...dust into dust...*

John Luther Adams

Players: Jamie Drake, Greg Harrison, Jonathan Smith, Stefan Kitai, Coach: Jamie Drake



PROGRAM NOTES

Chamade Suite: for Snare Drum Quartet

"Chamade is an old French military expression for a drum (or trumpet) signal indicating a cease fire. Retraite and Diane could be translated from French to English as "Taps" and "Morning Call". This suite is in fact a concert version of a series of drum signals composed for the Croatian Army." -Igor Lesnik

I RITI: Ritual March - "The Funeral of Achilles"

The Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi (1905 - 1988) is best known for writing music based around only one pitch, altered in all manners through microtonal oscillations, harmonic allusions, and changes in timbre and dynamics. His musical output, which encompasses most Western classical genres, remained largely undiscovered even within contemporary musical circles during most of his life, although he was a known friend and mentor to Alvin Curran and Frederic Rzewski and had collaborated with other American composers including John Cage, Morton Feldman and Earle Brown. *I RITI: Ritual March - The Funeral of Achilles* was composed in 1962. "Scelsi's music", wrote Arved Ashby in American Record Guide, "is indescribable: microtonal, arrhythmic, elemental, mysterious, slow-moving, not of our world. Nongrammatical. Visceral. A closed book. It follows no system and defined no audience."

What to do till the Power Comes on

"*What to Do till the Power Comes On* is a sound game for 4 players. The rules of the game are intended to function as a simple means whereby "found sound" can be organized into musical patterns. These rules should be employed in the event of a power failure. Although the piece uses electricity for the purposes of amplification, it does not rely in any central way on sources of energy other than the players themselves." -Ann Southam

Jim Montgomery of the Canadian Electronic Ensemble wrote, "We [the Canadian Electronic Ensemble] were interested in commissioning a number of the people who were involved in the early days of electronic music in Canada - Norma Beecroft, Gus Ciamaga, etc., and were of course interested in Ann because of her work with Sam Dolin at the Royal Conservatory. Given the nature of the piece, I personally was never quite sure whether or not she was having us on; ultimately, I decided she just wrote the piece she wanted to write. In any case it turned out to be arguably our most successful commission."

...and bells remembered...

John Luther Adams wrote: "My music has always been profoundly influenced by the natural world and a strong sense of place. Through sustained listening to the subtle resonances of the northern soundscape, I hope to explore the territory of 'sonic geography' - that region between place and culture...between environment and imagination." The performance of this work tonight will also include a video which is excerpts from the extraordinary film entitled "Winged Migration" which we felt fit perfectly with John Luther Adams' subtle composition.

Glass Houses No.1 & No.5 (1981)

"The first time I heard this piece (No.5) was in early 2009 on a Canadian Music Centre Sounds New Podcast featuring Ann Southam's works. It was a live recording with Christina Petrowska-Quilico and dancer, Christopher Glass. I was immediately drawn to this piece for its minimalistic, yet jazz-like nature. Though very repetitive, the tune felt unrestricted and free. Soon after, I decided to arrange some of the Glass Houses for marimba duo by splitting the two hands into four hands. I was very fortunate to perform this for Ann in the fall of 2009 at the University of Toronto. It was even better when I saw the joy, enthusiasm and interest she had for my arrangement(s)."

-Greg Harrison

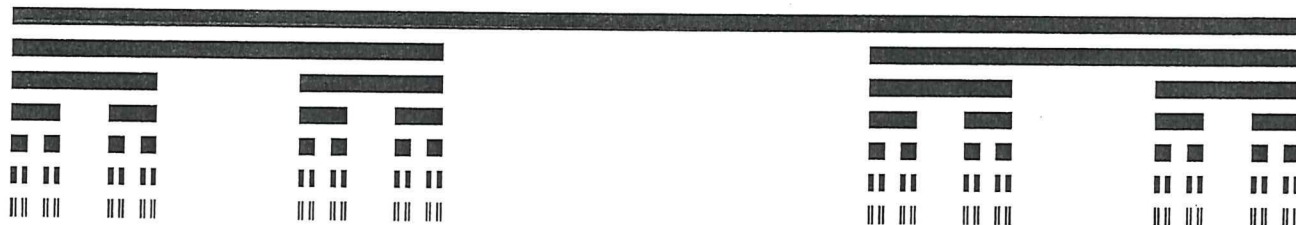
Dark River

Dark River (1995), written for four bass drums, is a sonic wonder of a minimalist nature inspired by a painting of the same name by Agnes Martin. The projections that accompany the performance will include this painting. On the page it seems simple as might also be the perception of the listener. However, when confronted with the performance a different challenge is evident. Written for two players, each is faced with two parts to play; one that is measured, and one that is to be played freely in response to the measured part. All of the parts are marked at an unchanging

dynamic level of triple piano. The sparsity of this piece results in a deep intensity for the player and for the listener. In comparing the feeling, and potential effect, that Zorn creates with the ideals of Agnes Martin it is easy to see similarities. "I have a vacant mind to do exactly what the inspiration calls for. And I don't start to paint until after I have an inspiration and I make up my mind that I'm not going to interfere. That's really the trouble with art today. It seems to me that the artist has an inspiration but before they can get it on the canvas they've had about fifty ideas ... and the inspiration disappears." - Agnes Martin

...dust into dust...

Alaskan composer John Luther Adams' work *Strange and Sacred Noise*, of which "...dust into dust..." is the first movement, is considered one of his seminal works, and an example of his music that is fully connected to and influenced by the natural world. In an essay about the composition, Adams writes "I wondered whether this was music at all ... It buzzes the eardrums, rattles the ribcage, and immerses the listener in an overwhelming physical presence of sound. For many years now, I've listened carefully to the sounds of the natural world and attempted to translate what I've heard there into my own music ... gradually, I've been drawn to the 'noisier' sounds of nature - ocean waves and waterfalls, storm winds and thunder, glaciers crashing into the sea - those elemental voices which resonate so profoundly in the human mind and spirit ... Standing on the bank of a great river at breakup, or near a tidewater glacier as a massive wall of ice explodes into the sea, we are confronted with the overwhelming violence of nature ... a violence at once terrifying and comforting, transpersonal and purifying." All of the movements of *Strange and Sacred Noise* are based on certain fractal sets - geometrical patterns based on mathematical equations - found in nature. "...dust into dust..." is a musical setting of the Cantor set fractal, which manifests itself by continually removing the middle third of a line segment *ad infinitum*. The Cantor dust fractal is a two dimensional, square-based version of the Cantor set. The movement takes as its starting point groups of nine, which can be divided into thirds or arranged as a square. The visual representation of the Cantor dust set is apparent in the way each rehearsal section is laid out in the score. The following picture is a visual representative of the structure of the piece.



BIOGRAPHY

BEVERLEY JOHNSTON is internationally recognized for her virtuosic and dynamic performances on a wide range of percussion instruments. Her performances have been distinguished as non-conventional, effectively combining classical transcriptions, contemporary music and a touch of theatre. Her performances and recordings have been broadcast on radio networks all over the world. Her interest in commissioning new works for percussion still reigns supreme and she has become well known for developing some eclectic repertoire for percussion, many of those pieces being played by percussionists from all over the world. She has released five solo CDs: *Impact* and *Alternate Currents* on the Centrediscs label, *Marimbach* on the CBC Records Musica Viva label and in 2004 a recording called *Garden of Delights* which can be purchased on her webpage, www.beverleyjohnston.com. Her latest recording of Alice Ping Yee Ho's percussion music called *Ming* was released on the Centrediscs label in 2009. In 2009 she was given the distinction of becoming an Ambassador of the Canadian Music Centre in honour of her exemplary commitment to the performance of the music of Canadian composers, and in 2010 she was invited to the Shenyang International Percussion Festival in China.

Beverley Johnston received her training at Vanier College in her native Montreal, and at the University of Toronto, where she studied with Russell Hartenberger, and where she now teaches. She currently lives in rural Ontario with her husband, composer Christos Hatzis. Beverley is a Marimba One and Paiste artist.